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August 24, 1988

G. KIM WINCUP, STAFF DIRECTOR

Mr. William H. Webster
 Director,
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Washington, D.C. 20505

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Dear Mr. Webster:

I am planning to conduct a set of hearings during the week of September 7, 1988, on Soviet mobilization readiness and the U.S. defense program. I would like your expert witnesses to appear at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 8, 1988, in Room 2118 of the Rayburn House Office Building before the Defense Policy Panel of the Armed Services Committee.

The specific questions on which the Defense Policy Panel is seeking the Central Intelligence Agency views are:

1. What is the current readiness status of Warsaw Pact forces? How would you characterize their posture? What is the defensive or offensive character of their deployment, their readiness, their manning levels, their training? How long would it take them to mobilize for an attack on NATO? What is the possibility they could attack without reinforcements from the Soviet Union?
2. What warning would we be likely to get of a Soviet deliberate and hasty mobilization. What would we see? How confident would the intelligence community be of a Soviet decision to attack? What impact would the loss of strategic surprises have on Soviet willingness to attack?
3. How do the Soviets think a war with NATO would start? Are there differences in the views of the political and military leaderships? How would you characterize Soviet grand strategy and operational strategy? What do the Soviets believe about U.S. and NATO strategy? Do they see any difference between our grand strategy and our operational strategy? How would they view a NATO decision to mobilize or to execute the Rapid Reinforcement Plan?

Mr. William H. Webster

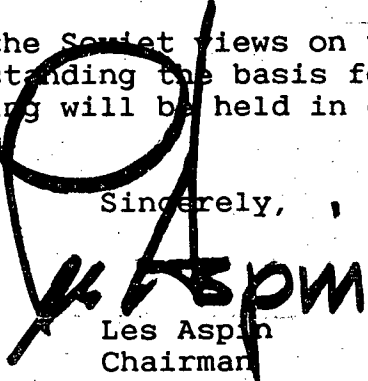
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4. What impact has General Secretary Gorbachev had on your view of these issues?

Understanding the Soviet views on these issues will greatly assist us in understanding the basis for the U.S. defense program. The hearing will be held in closed session to allow for free discussion.

Sincerely, ,


Les Aspin
Chairman

LA:jtd